Richmond Schools Reconfigured

Department of Education

News Releases

August 18, 2000 10:00 AM

Richmond County's Acadian students will have a homogeneous French school early this fall, Education Minister Jane Purves announced on Friday, Aug. 18. The school will be located in the existing Isle Madame District High.

Ms. Purves said the provincial cabinet has approved a reconfigured school system for Richmond County. The changes affect schools operated by both the Strait Regional and Conseil Scolaire school boards.

"The new configuration is a response to an order from Supreme Court Justice Arthur LeBlanc in which the judge ruled that Acadian entitled students had a right to be educated in a French only environment," Ms. Purves said. "The judge ruled that a homogeneous school be in place this fall."

The changes will occur when the new Richmond Academy, a Grade 9-12 school being built in Louisdale, is available for occupancy by the Strait Regional School Board.

Under the new configuration, all Acadian-entitled students will be able to attend classes at the Isle Madame High School, in Arichat, starting this fall. By moving all Acadian students to a homogeneous school at Arichat, a new French school intended for Petit de Grat on Isle Madame is no longer required.

As a result of the decision not to proceed with the Petit de Grat School, a French language school at Pomquet, Antigonish Co., slated to open in 2002, will now open a year earlier.

Ms. Purves said the Isle Madame school is a first-rate facility with more than enough space to meet both current needs and any future growth.

"The Isle Madame School had a $6-million renovation just six years ago. It has an auditorium suitable for drama and fine arts programs. There are three new science labs, a computer lab and a large cafeteria. It's a very good school," the minister said.

In the reconfigured system, elementary students in the English program will continue to attend Walter Fougere School, in Evanston, and Felix Marchand School, in Louisdale. Both schools, operated by the Strait Regional Board, were originally scheduled to close this year, but will now remain open.

The Felix Marchand School was built in 1967 and had a major refit

and expansion in 1990. The Walter Fougere School was built in 1978 and has a gymnasium, library and music room. With regular maintenance both schools have a significant life expectancy.

"We want, and in fact have been ordered by the courts, to provide a French-only school for Acadians and francophones at Isle Madame and Pomquet," said Ms. Purves. "In Richmond County we have more than enough good schools now to accommodate both French and English students. It simply doesn't make good sense to close two perfectly good schools, and spend $11 million on a new school that isn't needed."

FOR BROADCAST USE:

Richmond County's Acadian students will have a homogeneous French school in Isle Madame early this fall, says Education Minister Jane Purves.

The decision is in response to a Supreme Court ruling directing the government to open a French language school by September.

Ms. Purves says the existing Isle Madame District High School, currently shared by French and English students, will become an exclusively francophone school.

This announcement means an earlier plan to build a new school at Petit de Grat can be shelved.

The decision not to build a new school at Petit de Grat also means that a new francophone school for Pomquet, Antigonish County, can now open a year early -- in the fall of 2001.

-30-

Contact: David Harrigan
Department of Education
902-424-8307
E-mail: harrigdc@gov.ns.ca

Crown copyright © 2008, Province of Nova Scotia, all rights reserved.
Page last updated 2008-07-30.

Come to life - Discover Nova Scotia